

Versatile JCB Loadall improves efficiencies at Goedgevonden Farm

When Piet Badenhorst asked his former school friend, Alec Pieterse, what the most versatile piece of mechanical equipment was he had ever owned, the answer was quick and to the point, a JCB Loadall and Piet, by his own admission was sold on the idea.

Piet, his wife Marieta and son Baltus, are the third and fourth generations respectively growing essential crops on their family farm called Goedgevonden in the Delareyville district near Schweizer-Reneke, in South Africa's North West Province. Soybeans are their biggest crop, with maize and sunflowers making up the rest. The family also breeds Bonsmara cattle and Merino sheep.

"Cultivating soybeans is a relatively new crop for us and we've had successful crops since starting with it seven years ago," Piet tells us. "It's also the crop that has shown

the biggest increase in the world as its uses are varied due to its high protein content, which makes it ideal for cattle and chicken feeds and takes away the fish smell that some poultry had been fed with fish-meal."

Soybean plants are known to put nitrogen back in the soil by converting nitrogen in the atmosphere through a mutual effort between micro-organisms in the soil and nodules on the plants' roots. Interestingly, this process is known as symbiotic nitrogen fixation and reduces the fertilisers needed, although no planting

season can really be kicked off without first applying some fertiliser when preparing land for planting.

"When the planting season starts, things happen very quickly and we have to have all our mechanical and organic ducks in a row," Piet explains. "We used to load fertiliser using an auger system from a trailer into the feed hopper on the tractor-driven applicator that distributes the fertiliser, but it was a very slow process, and we were always keeping an eye open for a more efficient system."

While researching the market, Piet came across an online platform which featured the recent 2022 NAMPO show and there he discovered Loadalls made by JCB for which Bell Equipment is now the South African distributor. Piet was familiar with the JCB brand as he had recently bought a JCB 3DX Backhoe Loader which was proving invaluable on the farm, especially when used in repairing and maintaining roads and irrigation infrastructure plus a myriad of other uses.

"I then spoke to my old school chum, Alec Pieterse, who owns a JCB 531-70 Loadall and he could not stop listing the things that he can do with this very versatile machine," Piet continues. "As it happened, Rickus Erasmus, Bell Equipment's Sales Representative for our area, was also at school with us and it was easy to get the correct information from him on which JCB Loadall would be best suited for our varied farming operations."

Rickus suggested Piet look at the benefits the JCB 535-95AG Loadall as its boom, boasting a long 9,5 metre reach and 3,5-ton carrying capacity, could be just the versatile tool that the Goedgevonden Farm needed where loading and stacking was concerned.

"Since we took delivery of our JCB 535-95AG Loadall in June 2022, we've used it mainly on two fronts, namely unloading and loading 1-ton bulk bags of fertiliser from our suppliers and into the applicators and stacking big round bales of hay in easily accessible storage areas for winter feed for our Bonsmara cattle," Piet says. "The process of loading fertiliser into the tractor-mounted applicators has speeded up so much as the JCB Loadall easily manages the 1-ton self-loading bulk bag, which opens at the bottom with something akin to a drawstring and the whole bag is emptied at a much faster rate than the old system allowed." Piet and his operators have high

praise for the machine's simple controls and tight turning circle as both sets of wheels respond to steering. This has the benefit of not encroaching onto ploughed land. The interchangeable tools of forks for slinging the bulk bags, a large bucket for handling bulk commodities and a self-made skewer for handling the hay bales, all detach and attach easily which adds to the JCB 535-95AG's versatility and saves valuable production time.

The JCB 535-95AG Loadall was bought with a standard warranty of 12 months and unlimited hours and is linked to the JCB Livelink monitoring system. While under warranty it will be serviced by mechanics from Bell Equipment's nearby Wolmaransstad branch.

"We can already see how much time this JCB 535-95AG Loadall is saving us as we can unload fertiliser bags so much quicker off the trucks that deliver them and load our tractor-driven applicators in no time at all," Piet says. "Time is a critical factor in our short planting season and this machine is creating more of it for our benefit."



(From left): Vorster Snyman, Tiaan Boshoff, Baltus and Piet Badenhorst, Jandré Nieuwoudt and Bell Equipment Sales Representative, Rickus Erasmus.

